

**U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
Kremmling Field Office  
P.O. Box 68  
Kremmling, CO 80459**

## **ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

NUMBER: CO-120-2008-21-EA

PROJECT NAME: Donald Culver Permit Renewal # 0501739

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Allotments include all or part of

07024 (Dry Fork)	T9N R78W Sec 32 and 29
07025 (Culver)	T9N R78W Sec 30 and 29
07026 (Owl Creek)	T8N R78W Sec 8
07027 (Abandoned Ditch)	T8N R78W Sec 5
07028 (Bostwich)	T8N R78W Sec 4 and 5
07079 (Upper Bush Draw)	T8N R78W Sec 4, 5 and 9

APPLICANT: Donald Culver

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES:

Background: Allotments # 07026 (Owl Creek), # 07027 (Abandoned Ditch) and # 07028 (Bostwich) are allotments that have isolated public land that are unfenced with Donald Culver's private land. All allotments have a custodial, "C", allotment priority. Allotments # 07024 (Dry Fork) and # 07025 (Culver) are 100% public land but are a custodial, "C", allotment priority. These allotments were not assessed on-the-ground by a BLM Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) for compliance with the Standards for Public Land Health in Colorado (standards). However, a finding is made for each of the standards as part of the analysis in the environmental assessment.

Allotment # 07079 (Upper Bush Draw) includes 1,005 acres of BLM-administered public land. The allotment is categorized as an improve "I", allotment priority. The allotment was assessed on-the-ground by a BLM IDT for compliance with the standards and it was determined to not be meeting standards because of a past burn that burned too hot causing impacts that reduced plant health and changed the plant species.

Grazing allotments in the Kremmling Field Office (KFO) are prioritized for management according to one of three levels: Maintain, Improve, or Custodial. For Custodial allotments, the BLM must maintain the existing allotment situation and provide for management opportunities as needs arise for operators or other land use agencies. For Improve allotments, the BLM must improve forage production and condition in grazing allotments that are in unsatisfactory condition.

Proposed Action: The Proposed Action would renew livestock grazing permit # 0501739 that authorizes livestock grazing on allotments # 07027 (Abandoned Ditch), # 07028 (Bostwich), # 07024 (Dry Fork), # 07025 (Culver), # 07026 (Owl Creek), and # 07079 (Upper Bush Draw) (Attachment #1) (see map below):

- The permit would be renewed for 10-years (through February 28, 2018).
- The Standard Terms and Conditions are included in Attachment #2.
- There would be no changes to the kind or number of livestock, season of use, or amount of authorized preference expressed in Animal Unit Months (AUMs).

Allotment	Allotment	Livestock		Grazing Period		Type of Use	% Public Land*	AUMs**
Number	Name	Number	Cattle	Begin	End			
07024	Dry Fork	100	Cattle	6/1	6/30	A	100	99
07025	Culver	67	Cattle	6/1	6/30	A	100	66
07026	Owl Creek	200	Cattle	5/1	5/15	A	2	2
07027	Abandoned Ditch	55	Cattle	6/1	10/16	A	2	5
07028	Bostwich	377	Cattle	6/1	6/14	A	21	36
07079	Upper Bush Draw	99	Cattle	6/1	7/12	A	100	137

\*% Public Land is the percentage of forage within the public land (BLM) portion of the allotment.

\*\*AUM = animal unit month = amount of forage required to support 1 cow and calf for 1 month.

Total AUMs that would be authorized for this permit is 348.

Alternative #1: There would be no changes in numbers, seasons of use or AUMs. The only change would be the implementation of a deferred grazing system for allotment # 07079 (see Attachment #3). The allotment is divided by a fence into a north and south pasture. In 2008, the south pasture would be grazed first and then all the cattle would be moved to the north pasture. In 2009, the north pasture would be grazed first and then all cattle moved to the south pasture. This sequence would be followed until data indicates possible changes.

No Action Alternative (Continuation of Current Management): Livestock grazing authorized under the No Action Alternative would be the same as that authorized on the expiring grazing permit. Thus, the Proposed Action and No Action alternatives would have the same impacts.

Alternatives Considered But Eliminated From Further Analysis (No Grazing Alternative): No livestock grazing was considered but eliminated from further analysis for the following reasons:

- Livestock grazing within the Kremmling Field Office was fully analyzed and authorized in the RMP/EIS as recorded in the 1984 Approved Plan and Record of Decision. At that time a “No Grazing Alternative” was considered but not selected.
- This alternative is not consistent with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) that states: “the public lands be managed in a manner which

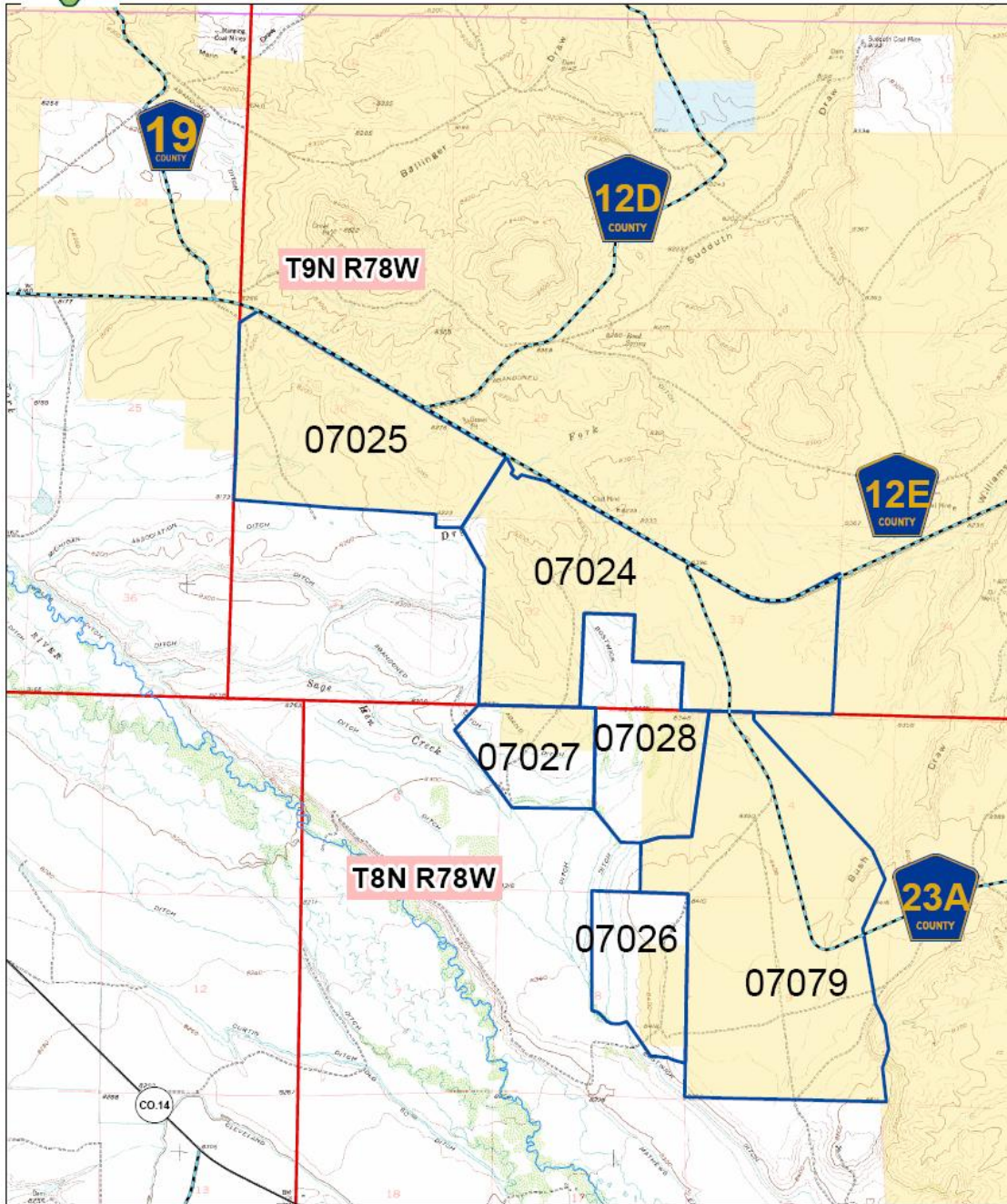
recognizes the Nation's need for domestic sources of minerals, food, timber, and fiber from public lands .....”

- During the public scoping and staff review there were no issues or concerns identified that would support a “No Grazing Alternative.”
- It has been determined that significant progress toward achieving compliance with the Standards for Public Land Health in Colorado would occur with the appropriate livestock grazing guidelines set forth in the Proposed Action and Alternative #1.

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE ACTION: The BLM is acting on a permit renewal request from Donald Culver permit # 0501739. The permit is subject to renewal at the discretion of the Secretary of the Interior for a period of up to ten years. If approved, the permit would be renewed for a period of ten years.



# Culver Ranch BLM



0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

1:30,974

No Warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the Accuracy, Reliability, or Completeness of this Data for Individual Use or Aggregate Use with Other Data.

Maps: Gould NW Eagle Hill BLM, Kremmling FO 10/2007

**PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW:** The Proposed Action is subject to and has been reviewed for conformance with the following plan (43 CFR 1610.5, BLM 1617.3):

**Name of Plan:** Kremmling Resource Management Plan (RMP), Record of Decision (ROD)

**Date Approved:** December 19, 1984

**Decision Number/Page:** Livestock Grazing pages 6 through 8 as revised

**Decision Language:** Objectives of the RMP/ROD include allocation of a base level of livestock forage and maintaining or improving forage production and condition in areas where livestock grazing is a priority or compatible with the land use priority. Allotments # 07024, # 07025, # 07026, # 07027, # 07028, and # 07079 have land-use priority of coal. Grazing is compatible with this land-use priority.

**Standards for Public Land Health:** In January 1997, Colorado Bureau of Land Management (BLM) approved the Standards for Public Land Health. Standards describe conditions needed to sustain public land health and relate to all uses of the public lands. The following are the approved standards:

<b>Standard</b>	<b>Definition/Statement</b>
#1 Upland Soils	Upland soils exhibit infiltration and permeability rates that are appropriate to soil type, climate, land form, and geologic processes. Adequate soil infiltration and permeability allows for the accumulation of soil moisture necessary for optimal plant growth and vigor, and minimizes surface runoff.
#2 Riparian Systems	Riparian systems associated with both running and standing water, function properly and have the ability to recover from major surface disturbances such as fire, severe grazing, or 100-year floods. Riparian vegetation captures sediment, and provides forage, habitat and bio-diversity. Water quality is improved or maintained. Stable soils store and release water slowly.
#3 Plant and Animal Communities	Healthy, productive plant and animal communities of native and other desirable species are maintained at viable population levels commensurate with the species and habitat's potential. Plants and animals at both the community and population level are productive, resilient, diverse, vigorous, and able to reproduce and sustain natural fluctuations, and ecological processes.
#4 Threatened and Endangered Species	Special status, threatened and endangered species (federal and state), and other plants and animals officially designated by the BLM, and their habitats are maintained or enhanced by sustaining healthy, native plant and animal communities.
#5 Water Quality	The water quality of all water bodies, including ground water where applicable, located on or influenced by BLM lands will achieve or exceed the Water Quality Standards established by the State of Colorado. Water Quality Standards for surface and ground waters include the designated beneficial uses, numeric criteria, narrative criteria, and anti-degradation requirements set forth under State law as found in (5 CCR 1002-8), as required by Section 303(c) of the Clean Water Act.

Because a standard exists for these five categories, a finding must be made for each of them in the environmental analysis. These findings are located in specific elements below or in the Interdisciplinary Team Analysis Review Record and Checklist (IDT-RRC) (Appendix 1).

The following table is a summary of the current situation and the total number of acres that have been assessed. A BLM IDT assessed allotment # 07079. It was determined that the southern portion of the allotment was not meeting the land health standards for soil and vegetation due to a past fire that burned very hot. Allotments #07024, #07025, #07026, #07027, and # 07028 were not assessed for standards due to their small size, small percentage of public land, and their “C” priority.

<b>CURRENT SITUATION</b> <b>Total # of Acres Assessed in allotment</b> <b>07079 (1005 acres)</b> <b>07024, 07025, 07026, 07027 and 07028 were not assessed</b> <b>Total acres assessed 1005 acres</b>				<b>PROPOSAL</b> <b>(With Mitigation)</b>	
<b>Standards</b>	<b>Acres Achieving or Moving Towards Achieving</b>	<b>Acres Not Achieving</b>	<b>Causative Factors</b>	<b>Acres Achieving or Moving towards Achieving</b>	<b>Acres Not Achieving</b>
<b>Std. 1 Upland Soils</b>	804	200	1988 fire	1004	0
<b>Std. 2 Wetlands</b>	1	0			0
<b>Std. 3 Vegetation</b>	805	200	1980's fire	1005	0
<b>Std. 3 Wildlife</b>	805	200	1980's fire	1005	0
<b>Std. 4 T&amp;E</b>	805	200	1980's fire	1005	0
<b>Std. 5 H2O Qual.</b>	1005	0		1005	0
<b>Totals</b>				1005	

**CRITICAL ELEMENTS:** The following critical elements: Air Quality, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, Environmental Justice, Native American Religious Concerns, Farmlands- Prime and Unique, Floodplains, Wastes, Hazardous or Solid, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and Wilderness were evaluated and determined that they were not present or that there would be no impact to them from the Proposed Action or No Action Alternative. See IDT-RRC in Appendix 1 for further information.

The following critical elements were determined to be potentially impacted and were carried forward for analysis from the IDT-RRC in Appendix 1.

## CULTURAL RESOURCES

Affected Environment: Range permit renewals are undertakings under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Range improvements associated with the allotment (e.g., fences, spring improvements) are subject to compliance requirements under Section 106 and will undergo standard cultural resources inventory and evaluation procedures. During Section 106 review, a cultural resource assessment was completed for each allotment in January and February 2007 following the procedures and guidance outlined in the 1980 National Programmatic Agreement Regarding the Livestock Grazing and Range Improvement Program, IM-WO-99-039, IM-CO-99-007, IM-CO-99-019, and IM-CO-00-026. The results of the assessment are summarized in the table below. Copies of the cultural resource assessments are in the Kremmling Field Office archaeology files.

Allotment Number	Acres Inventoried at a Class III level	Acres NOT Inventoried at a Class III Level*	Percent -%- of Allotment Inventoried at a Class III level	Number of Cultural Resources known in allotment	High Potential of Historic Properties (yes/no)	Management Recommendations (Additional inventory required and historic properties to be visited)
07079	0	1,005	0	0	No	Class III inventory of approximately 1,005 acres.
07028	0	104	0	0	No	Class III inventory of approximately 104 acres.
07027	0	80	0	0	No	Class III inventory of approximately 80 acres.
07026	0	80	0	0	No	Class III inventory of approximately 80 acres.

Allotment Number	Acres Inventoried at a Class III level	Acres NOT Inventoried at a Class III Level*	Percent -%-of Allotment Inventoried at a Class III level	Number of Cultural Resources known in allotment	High Potential of Historic Properties (yes/no)	Management Recommendations (Additional inventory required and historic properties to be visited)
07025	0	540	0	4	Yes	Class III inventory of approximately 540 acres and relocate and too evaluate sites 5JA177 and 5JA348 needs data.
07024	0	848	0	4	Yes	Class III inventory of approximately 848 acres and relocate and too evaluate sites 5JA177, 5JA178, and 5JA150.

Environmental Consequences: The direct impacts that occur where livestock concentrate include trampling, chiseling and churning of site soils, cultural features and cultural artifacts, artifact breakage and impacts from standing, leaning and rubbing against historic structures, above ground cultural features and rock art. Indirect impacts include soil erosion, gulying and increased potential for unlawful collection and vandalism. Continued grazing may cause substantial ground disturbance and cause cumulative, long term, irreversible adverse effects to historic properties.

#### Mitigation:

-A Class III field inventory would be completed within the ten-year expiration period of the grazing permit. Mitigation would be identified and implemented in consultation with the Colorado State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) if historic properties were located during the subsequent field inventory and BLM determined that grazing activities would adversely impact the properties.

#### INVASIVE, NON-NATIVE SPECIES

Affected Environment: Currently, allotments # 07024 and # 07025 have musk thistle in the allotment or adjacent to the allotment. Allotments # 07026, # 07027, # 07028, and # 07079 have no known weed infestations. The Jackson County Weed department, in partnership with the BLM, is currently treating the known weed occurrences in allotment # 07024 and # 07025.

Environmental Consequences: Livestock operations can contribute to the introduction and spread of noxious weeds on public land because livestock are vectors from which noxious



weed seeds can be transported. The Jackson County Weed department would continue to treat known weed occurrences in allotment # 07024 and # 07025, thus decreasing the chances of additional spread from livestock grazing. A noxious weed stipulation is included in the Standard Terms and Conditions of livestock grazing permits/leases (see Attachment # 2). The stipulation informs the permittee/lessee of their responsibility to notify the BLM of any weeds in the allotment that may be caused by their livestock operation. If the BLM is notified of any weeds in the allotment, control measures would be implemented by the BLM, in partnership with the Jackson County.

## MIGRATORY BIRDS

**Affected Environment:** A variety of migratory bird species, primarily birds of prey and songbirds, use the allotments. Surveys conducted in 1994 by the Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas Partnership recorded many species in the area including Swainson's hawks, Red-tailed hawks, Golden Eagles, Green-tailed Towhees, Mountain Bluebirds, Sage Thrashers, Spotted Towhees, Rock Wrens, and Common Nighthawks in the sagebrush habitat common to these allotments.

**Environmental Consequences:** Under the Proposed Action, the permit would be renewed without any changes. Since there would be no changes to the permit, the Proposed Action would maintain current conditions for migratory birds. Alternative #1 would implement a new deferred grazing plan for allotment # 07079 which would help prevent livestock from grazing the same vegetation multiple times during the season-of-use. This type of system would be more beneficial to migratory birds since grass and forb production would likely increase as compared to the continuation of current grazing management. The deferred grazing system would provide for better plant vigor and thereby would produce more plant material available for bird use, especially by those species that nest on the ground.

## THREATENED, ENDANGERED, AND SENSITIVE SPECIES (includes a finding on Standard 4)

**Affected Environment:** A list of threatened, endangered, and candidate species which could inhabit the proposed project area was received from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on March 31, 2008. Analysis of this list indicated that no threatened, endangered, or candidate species have been recorded in the allotment proposed for renewal.

Greater sage-grouse, a BLM-designated Sensitive Species, inhabit all allotments proposed for renewal. One sage-grouse strutting ground (lek) is located within allotment # 07024, and four more leks are within four miles of the allotments. Each allotment includes sagebrush habitat which provides suitable nesting cover and brood-rearing habitat for sage-grouse. Since research has determined that 80% of sage-grouse hens nest within four miles of the leks where they are bred, nesting is occurring in these allotments. In addition, allotments # 07024 and # 07025 provide winter habitat for sage-grouse.

**Environmental Consequences:** Under the Proposed Action, the permit would be renewed without any changes. Since there would be no changes to the permit, the Proposed Action is expected to maintain current conditions for Greater sage-grouse. Alternative #1 would be more beneficial to sage-grouse in allotment # 07079 since the deferred grazing plan would help prevent livestock from grazing the same vegetation multiple times during the season-of-use.

This system would increase grass and forb productivity in the allotment where nesting and early brood rearing habitat occurs. The increase in production would enhance sage-grouse nesting success since more cover would be available to conceal nests from predators and adverse weather. Brood survival would also increase since more cover and food would be available as they migrate to adjacent brood-rearing habitat.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for Threatened & Endangered species: Allotments # 07024, # 07025, # 07026, # 07027, and # 07028 have not been assessed, but there are no known concerns. Allotment # 07079 was assessed for standards in 2005 and 200-acres failed Standard 4 due to a past fire. Under the Proposed Action, conditions are expected to remain the same and under Alternative #1 conditions for Standard 4 would likely improve.

#### WATER QUALITY, SURFACE AND GROUND (includes a finding on Standard 5)

Affected Environment: Allotment # 07079 is within two 5<sup>th</sup> order watersheds, the Michigan River and the Canadian River, within the North Platte River basin. Approximately 397 acres of the western portion of the allotment drains towards the northwest and is within the Michigan River watershed. If any runoff left the allotment, it would be intercepted by the Bostwick ditch and laterals. It is unlikely that any runoff from this portion of the allotment reaches Sage Hen Creek or other surface waters. The remaining 608 acres drain to the east-northeast to Bush Draw, an ephemeral/intermittent tributary to the Canadian River. Just past the allotment boundary is a small retention dam on the draw, with another two dams further down the drainage. These livestock impoundments provide early season livestock water. It is approximately five miles from the allotment boundary to the Canadian River, and with the low gradient xeric terrain and the impoundments, spring runoff generally wouldn't reach the river. A discussion of each allotment's runoff pathway is discussed in an earlier NEPA document prepared for the permit renewal in 1998 (CO-018-98-14 AD) and its attached Water Quality Report.

Due to Bush Draw not having perennial flows, the BLM does not try to sample water quality. Colorado's '303(d) List' and the 'Monitoring and Evaluation List' do not identify water quality concerns in Sage Hen Creek, Bush Draw, the Michigan River, or the Canadian River.

Curtain Spring is located along the southeastern border of the allotment. The small spring was sampled during a 1980 inventory and found to have water of suitable quality for agricultural purposes. The spring is developed as a pit or tank, and in some late summers does not have any water. Johnson Spring is located along the eastern fence in Bush Draw. There is a small hillside seep that was originally developed with a spring box and trough in 1942. Currently, the seep feeds a large reservoir located in Bush Draw. The reservoir was also sampled and found to be adequate for agricultural uses.

Environmental Consequences: The Proposed Action would continue the existing conditions, which includes poor ground cover and vegetative production on about 20% of the allotment # 07079. Although off-site impacts to surface water quality would not be measurable, the continuance of poor vegetative cover and soil health would lower the overall watershed health within the allotment. These poor conditions would reduce water infiltration, retention, and cycling within the soil and could increase wind or water erosion. Alternative #1 is intended to improve vegetative conditions, particularly within the old burn located in the southern portion of

the allotment. Improving the vegetative cover and production within the allotment would also improve soil conditions, resulting in a more stable productive watershed.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for water quality: The allotment is considered to be meeting the Standard for water quality, but continuing current management would put 200-acres at risk for not meeting this standard. The proposed grazing system in Alternative #1 would help the 200 acres improve in condition and continue to meet the standard in the future.

#### WETLANDS & RIPARIAN ZONES (includes a finding on Standard 2)

Affected Environment: Management in the un-assessed allotments would not be altered, so those wetlands are not be impacted as part of the Proposed Action or Alternative #1. Allotment # 07079 has very limited wetland values associated with the impoundment located on Bush Draw known as “Johnson Spring”. The Draw itself is generally grassed, but the constructed impoundment has a sedge/rush community on the upstream shoreline and a small patch of cattails near the dam face. Curtain Spring does not support wetland vegetation.

Environmental Consequences: The Proposed Action would continue the present conditions around Curtain Spring and the upper portion of Bush Draw. Alternative #1 would provide a later grazing season for each half of the allotment on a bi-annual schedule. The shortened grazing period and periodic deferment from grazing should benefit the wetland species with improved plant vigor and production. Due to the limited water sources, rest in the earlier portion of the grazing season would allow growth during the time of greatest soil moisture.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for riparian systems: The livestock reservoir has created a small wetland community in the draw, but is not a natural system. The bare areas of ground due to waterline fluctuations and the dam itself, and grazing along the shoreline are expected at a constructed livestock water source.

**NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS:** The following non-critical elements were determined to be potentially impacted and were carried forward for analysis from the IDT-RRC in Appendix 1.

#### SOILS (includes a finding on Standard 1)

**Affected Environment:** The Jackson County soil survey maps Allotment # 07079 as primarily Morset loam, 1-15% slopes. The soils have high plant available moisture, moderate permeability, and low-to-medium rates of runoff. The soil's fertility is highly tolerant to erosion loss.

**Environmental Consequences:** The burned area was monitored as having good grass cover and little cattle use in the years immediately following the burn, which seems to indicate most of the burn area still had productive soils and was properly rested following the burn. During the 2005 field assessment, the center of the burn was still apparent. In this small area, the fire appears to have been a high intensity burn, possibly sterilizing the soil or changing physical properties such as water infiltration. Under the Proposed Action, the allotment would continue to be grazed during the prime portion of the grazing season. It is unlikely that any further improvement of the old burn area would occur.

Alternative #1's grazing system would provide each portion of the allotment, including the burn, a shorter grazing period and on a bi-annual rotation, a later turnout date. This should help stimulate the overall vegetative production, improving soil cover and the amount of litter available for soil incorporation.

**Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for upland soils:** Approximately 20% of the allotment was determined to be not meeting the Soil Standard due to a burn that occurred in the 1980s. The Proposed Action would not help the recovery of the area, and without additional actions, the conditions would continue. Alternative #1 would help move the old burn area towards meeting the soil standard.

#### VEGETATION (includes a finding on Standard 3)

**Affected Environment:** Allotments # 07024 (Dry Fork), # 07025 (Culver), #07026 (Owl Creek), # 07027 (Abandoned Ditch), # 07028 (Bostwich), and # 07079 (Upper Bush Draw) are comprised of a mixture of sagebrush with an understory of grasses. Big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*) is the dominant shrub with minor amounts of antelope bitterbrush (*Purshia tridentata*), serviceberry (*Amelanchier alnifolia*), rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus* spp), and snowberry (*Symphoricarpos* spp). Grasses and forbs make up the majority of the forage available to livestock and wildlife. Prevalent grasses include bluebunch wheatgrass (*Pseudoroegneria spicata*), pine needlegrass (*Stipa pinetorum*), needle-and-thread (*Hesperostipa comata*), Indian ricegrass (*Achnatherum hymenoides*), western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*), and bluegrasses (*Poa* spp). Forbs that are found include buckwheat (*Eriogonum* spp), rose pussytoes (*Antennaria rosea*), fringed sage (*Artemisia frigida*), chiming bells (*Mertensia* spp), penstemon (*Penstemon* spp), lupine (*Lupinus* spp), and milkvetch (*Astragalus* spp), among others. The forb component can vary greatly in species.

**Environmental Consequences:** Under the Proposed Action, the permit would be renewed without any changes. Under Alternative #1, the proposed new grazing system in allotment #

07079 would prevent livestock from grazing the same vegetation multiple times during the year. The lack of multiple defoliation would provide for better plant vigor.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Wildlife, Aquatic and Wildlife, Terrestrial): Allotment # 07079 was assessed for standards in 2005, and 200 acres failed the vegetative standard due to a past fire. There are no known vegetation concerns on the other allotments.

#### WILDLIFE, TERRESTRIAL (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment: The allotments included in the proposed grazing permit renewal provide habitat for a variety of upland wildlife species. Pronghorn, elk, mule deer, coyotes, badgers, and a variety of small rodents inhabit the allotments at least part of the year. Elk and pronghorn use the northern allotments (# 07024 & # 07025) primarily during winter, while the others species are generally year-long residents.

Environmental Consequences: Under the Proposed Action, the permit would be renewed without any changes. Since there would be no changes to the permit, the Proposed Action is expected to maintain current conditions for terrestrial wildlife. Alternative #1 would implement a new deferred grazing plan for allotment # 07079. This type of system would be more beneficial to terrestrial wildlife since grass and forb production would likely increase as compared to the Proposed Action. This additional vegetation would be especially important to wildlife that uses the allotment during winter.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Vegetation and Wildlife, Aquatic): Under the Proposed Action, conditions are expected to remain the same and under Alternative #1 conditions for Standard 3 would likely improve in allotment # 07079.

**CUMULATIVE IMPACTS SUMMARY:** Livestock grazing has been an important use of the public lands in the Kremmling Field Office since the introduction of domestic livestock in the 1870s. Presently, the Field Office supports a grazing program on approximately 378,000 acres of BLM-administered public lands. Currently, these public ranges are licensed at a level of approximately 39,726 Animal Unit Months (AUMs) for livestock.

For the purpose of this EA, the general geographic boundary for cumulative impact analysis is North Park. The Kremmling Field Office is divided east to west by the Continental Divide. The public lands to the north of the divide are generally referred to as North Park, and those to the south of the divide, Middle Park. In North Park, there are approximately 260,000 acres of BLM-administered public lands that are currently being grazed, and 26,656 AUMs that are licensed.

In looking at past actions within the geographic area over the past ten years, there have not been any major changes to the North Park allotments. A majority of the allotments have been assessed for standards and the permits modified where needed due to non-compliance with specific standards or new information that has arrived (i.e. new sage grouse lek). A BLM IDT assessed allotment # 07079. It was determined that the southern portion of the allotment was not meeting the land health standards for soil and vegetation due to a past fire that burned very hot.

Allotments #07024, #07025, #07026, #07027, and # 07028 were not assessed for standards due to their small size, small percentage of public land, and their “C” priority.

In looking at reasonably foreseeable actions, the Coalmont area in southern Jackson County has seen recent interest in oil and gas development. There is a potential this activity could have a cumulative impact on North Park allotments in the future depending upon the extent of development. Other reasonably foreseeable actions that are projected to occur include minor range improvement projects.

In terms of cumulative impacts to cultural resources, grazing may cause substantial ground disturbance and cause cumulative, long term, irreversible adverse effects to historic properties throughout the Kremmling Field Office. However, as part of the BLM permit renewal process, allotments are being assessed and inventoried for cultural resources. If resources are found, and eligible for NRHP, mitigation is implemented. This process is attempting to mitigate any major cumulative impacts to cultural resources in the Kremmling Field Office.

PERSONS / AGENCIES CONSULTED: Starting in February 2007, a scoping process was begun to request information concerning the renewal of grazing permits/leases and to prioritize areas or allotments with issues and concerns. The Field Office sent scoping letters, along with land status maps showing the affected allotments, to the following groups and agencies: Colorado Division of Wildlife (Steamboat, Walden, Hot Sulphur Springs, Ft Collins); District Board of Grazing Advisors; County Commissioners (Grand, Jackson); Stock Growers (Middle Park, North Park, Upper Big Laramie River Ranch Assoc.); Northwest Resource Advisory Council; United States Forest Service (Silverthorne, Granby, Walden); US Fish and Wildlife Service (Arapaho Wildlife Refuge); Tribal Councils (Arapaho, Shoshone, Southern Ute); Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs; Ute Indian Tribe Uintah & Ouray Agency Business Committee; Colorado Environmental Coalition; Colorado State Land Board.

The BLM Colorado State Office also mailed outreach letters, concerning the renewal of grazing permits/leases, to all Congressional offices, State and Federal agencies, and major environmental, conservation, and user group organizations.

In addition, individual letters were sent to the affected permittees/lessees informing them that their permit/lease was up for renewal and requested any information they wanted included in, or taken into consideration, during the renewal process. A Notice of Public Scoping was posted on the Internet, at the Colorado BLM home page, asking for public input on permit/lease renewals and the assessment of public land health standards within the Field Office. This notice was followed up in October with an Internet posting of the Field Office prioritization of allotments and a determination as to which allotments would be assessed according to the land health standards. The proposed project was also posted on the Kremmling Internet NEPA Register.

INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW: See IDT-RRC in Appendix 1.

# FONSI

## CO-120-2008-21-EA

Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in the attached environmental assessment, and considering the significance criteria in 40 CFR 1508.27, I have determined that Alternative #1 will not have a significant effect on the human environment. An environmental impact statement is therefore not required.

### DECISION RECORD

DECISION: It is my decision to implement Alternative #1 and allotment # 07079's new grazing plan (see Attachment #3) and renew livestock Grazing Permit # 0501739 until February 28, 2018. The new permit will be subject to the authorized grazing plan and mitigation measures included below.

RATIONALE: Alternative #1 was chosen because it would improve the overall vegetative production, improve soil cover and the amount of litter available for soil incorporation, produce more plant material available for bird use, especially by those species that nest on the ground, and improve habitat conditions for sage-grouse.

When a livestock grazing permit/lease expires, it is subject to renewal at the discretion of the Secretary of the Interior for a period of up to ten years. Livestock grazing, when properly managed in accordance with good rangeland ecology practices, has been proven to result in improved land health. The public benefits from public lands which are maintained in a healthy condition and are able to produce sustainable resources for a variety of uses.

The livestock producer benefits from a renewed livestock grazing permit/lease to graze forage on BLM managed land. Livestock grazing on BLM managed land is an integral part of the livestock producer's operation, and an important part of local rural economies

#### MITIGATION MEASURES:

##### Cultural:

-A Class III field inventory will be completed within the ten-year expiration period of the grazing permit. Mitigation would be identified and implemented in consultation with the Colorado State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) if historic properties are located during the subsequent field inventory and if BLM determines that grazing activities would adversely impact the properties.

COMPLIANCE/MONITORING: Compliance with the renewed livestock grazing permit and its associated terms and conditions will be accomplished through the Kremmling Field Office Range Management Program. Livestock grazing will be monitored by the range staff and other area personnel, as appropriate, to ensure compliance. The Kremmling Field Office Range

Monitoring Plan will be used to schedule periodic utilization checks, collect trend data, and evaluate allotment condition. When activity plans have been developed covering an allotment, monitoring methods and schedules included in them will be applied to the allotment. Changes will be made to the permit, based on monitoring, when changes are determined necessary to further protect land health

NAME OF PREPARER: Peter Torma

NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: Joe Stout

DATE: 5/6/08

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL: /s/ Dave Stout

DATE SIGNED: 5/7/08

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1). Livestock grazing permit # 0501739
- 2). Standard Term and Conditions
- 3). Grazing plan for allotment # 07079

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 – Interdisciplinary Team Analysis Review Record and Checklist



## Appendix 1

### **INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM ANALYSIS REVIEW RECORD AND CHECKLIST:**

**Project Title: Donald Culver grazing permit renewal**

**Project Leader: Peter Torma**

#### **Consultation/Permit Requirements:**

<b>Consultation</b>	<b>Date Initiated</b>	<b>Date Completed</b>	<b>Responsible Specialist/ Contractor</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Cultural/Archeological Clearance/SHPO	NA	NA	Wyatt	
Native American	4/14/08		Wyatt	See below.
T&E Species/FWS	N/A	N/A	M. McGuire	
Permits Needed (i.e. Air or Water)	N/A	N/A	P. Belcher	

**(NP) = Not Present**

**(NI) = Resource/Use Present but Not Impacted**

**(PI) = Potentially Impacted and Brought Forward for Analysis.**

<b>NP NI PI</b>	<b>Discipline/Name</b>	<b>Date Review Comp.</b>	<b>Initials</b>	<b>Review Comments (required for Critical Element NIs, and for elements that require a finding but are not carried forward for analysis.)</b>
<b>CRITICAL ELEMENTS</b>				
NI	Air Quality <b>Belcher</b>	4/16/08	PB	The Proposed Action and Alternative would not impact air quality.
NP	Areas of Critical Environmental Concern <b>Stout</b>	5/6/08	JS	There are no Areas of Critical Environmental Concern in the proximity of the proposed project area.
PI	Cultural Resources <b>Wyatt</b>	5/1/08	BW	See analysis in EA.
NP	Environmental Justice <b>Stout</b>	5/6/08	JS	According to the most recent Census Bureau statistics (2000), there are no minority or low income communities within the Kremmling Planning Area.
NP	Farmlands, Prime and Unique <b>Belcher</b>	4/16/08	PB	There are no farmlands, prime or unique, in the proximity of the proposed project area.
NP	Floodplains <b>Belcher</b>	4/16/08	PB	There would be no impacts to floodplains.
PI	Invasive, Non-native Species <b>Torma</b>	2/14/08	PT	See analysis in EA.
PI	Migratory Birds <b>McGuire</b>	3/31/08	MM	See analysis in EA.
NI	Native American Religious Concerns <b>Wyatt</b>	4/14/08	BW	To date, no Native American Tribe has identified any area of traditional spiritual concerns.
PI	T/E, and Sensitive Species (Finding on Standard 4) <b>McGuire</b>	3/31/08	MM	See analysis in EA.
NP	Wastes, Hazardous and Solid <b>Hodgson</b>	2/8/08	KH	There are no quantities of wastes, hazardous or solid, located on BLM-administered lands in the proposed project area, and there would be no wastes generated as a result of the Proposed

				Action, Alternative #1, or No Action alternative.
PI	Water Quality, Surface and Ground (Finding on Standard 5) <b>Belcher</b>	4/16/08	PB	See analysis in EA.
PI	Wetlands & Riparian Zones (Finding on Standard 2) <b>Belcher</b>	4/16/08	PB	See analysis in EA.
NP	Wild and Scenic Rivers <b>Sterin</b>	4/15/08	BS	There are no eligible Wild and Scenic River segments in the proposed project area.
NP	Wilderness <b>Sterin</b>	4/15/08	BS	There is no designated Wilderness or Wilderness Study Areas in the proximity of the proposed project area.
<b>NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS</b> (A finding must be made for these elements)				
PI	Soils (Finding on Standard 1) <b>Belcher</b>	4/16/08	PB	See analysis in EA.
PI	Vegetation (Finding on Standard 3) <b>Torma</b>	2/14/08	PT	See analysis in EA.
NP	Wildlife, Aquatic (Finding on Standard 3) <b>McGuire</b>	3/31/08	MM	No aquatic wildlife are present in the allotments proposed for renewal. Finding: N/A
PI	Wildlife, Terrestrial (Finding on Standard 3) <b>McGuire</b>	3/31/08	MM	See analysis in EA.
<b>OTHER NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS</b>				
NI	Access/Transportation <b>Monkouski</b>	4/23/08	JJM	No impact from permit renewal.
NI	Fire <b>Wyatt</b>	5/1/08	BW	No impacts, reduces fuel loading.
NI	Forest Management <b>Rosene</b>	3/26/08	RR	There would be impacts.
NI	Geology and Minerals <b>Hodgson</b>	2/8/08	KH	No impacts.
NI	Hydrology/Water Rights <b>Belcher</b>	4/18/08	PB	There would be no impacts.
NI	Paleontology <b>Rupp</b>	1/28/08	FGR	No impacts from renewing permit. Ground disturbing impacts would be reviewed to determine the need for Paleontological inventory.
NI	Noise <b>Monkouski</b>	4/23/08	JJM	No impact from permit renewal.
NI	Range Management <b>Torma</b>	2/12/08	PT	There are no changes in AUMs, season of use or livestock numbers. The proposed new grazing system for # 07079 would still allow for grazing.
NI	Lands/ Realty Authorizations <b>Cassel</b>	1/16/08	SC	There are no leases or permits in the location of the proposed action. There are a couple of road ROWs to the permittee and a couple of telephone ROWs. There would be no impact to these ROWs from the proposed action.
NI	Recreation <b>Monkouski</b>	4/23/08	JJM	No changes to the permit are proposed. Therefore, there would be no new impacts from implementation of the Proposed Action or No Action Alternative.
NI	Socio-Economics <b>Stout</b>	5/6/08	JS	Since there would be no change in use, there would be no socio-economic impacts.
NI	Visual Resources <b>Hodgson</b>	4/14/08	KH	No changes to the permit are proposed. Therefore, there would be no new impacts from implementation of the Proposed Action or No Action Alternative.
PI	Cumulative Impact Summary <b>Stout</b>	5/6/08	JS	See analysis in EA.
<b>FINAL REVIEW</b>				
	P&E Coordinator <b>Stout</b>	5/6/08	JS	
	Field Manager <b>D. Stout</b>			

